

# informed

THE NEWSLETTER FOR MONTESSORI PROFESSIONALS

MONTESSORI AOTEAROA  
NEW ZEALAND

Montessori  
AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

ISSUE 43 | SEPTEMBER 2016

Kia ora,

Conference has been and gone but what a wonderful three days it was sharing, networking, having our passion in Montessori re-generated and of course learning. By now, I'm sure you have had many discussions with your colleagues, and new initiatives have been introduced following it

Many thanks to kaiako and students from the Waikato for their beautiful singing and playing at the conference opening. It made the opening very special. Our keynote speakers, Wendy Calise, Sarah (and David) Werner Andrews and Peta Gibson were all very touched by being welcomed to the Waikato by tangata whenua. This issue contains write-ups from Council members on some of the workshops they attended.

The third of the three wananga have been completed in the Bay of Plenty and Waikato. From the feedback, and the closed Facebook page set up for the wananga, it was overall very successful. It was amazing for me to read the reflections many participants wrote on the shift they have made in their thinking and what they have changed at their centres and kura as a result of them. Next year we will running this professional development in both Auckland (term 1) and Wellington (term 2). Auckland registrations will open in November for February commencement.

Nga mihi,



Cathy Wilson  
MANZ EXECUTIVE OFFICER,  
MONTESSORI AOTEAROA  
NEW ZEALAND

## Contents

### Professional Development

*Montessori Near You:*

*Montessori to the Fenceline (3-6 years)*

*Storyteller of Truth (6-12 years)*

### MANZ Conference 2016 Reviews

*Trust the Wise Infant*

*Creating an environment of respectful practice in the 0-3 classroom*

*Toilet Learning*

*The Adult's Role in Creating Exploration*

*Exploring Social Experience*

*Success through our Failures*

*Agency and Empathy*

### Workshop Write-Up

*Montessori Model United Nations*

*New Teacher Workshop*

### Situations Vacant



# MANZ Professional Development

We have a variety of exciting professional development lined up.

## Professional Development for 3-6 years Montessori near You: Montessori To The Fenceline

**Facilitator:** Pam Shand

**Time:** 9am – 4pm

**17 September:** Herne Bay, Auckland

**15 October:** Scuola Montessori, Tauranga

**29 October:** Casa Dei Bambini Montessori Foundation School, Christchurch

We are offering these workshops again following the success of them earlier in the year.

Montessori was adamant that tamariki should be at liberty to choose their engagement, yet for a variety of reasons many Montessori teachers are reluctant to let the doors to the outside stand open. Many kaiako (teachers) have said that the Montessori programme gets lost outside.

*Montessori to the Fenceline* is a workshop focused on resolving this problem. It is designed for teaching **teams** who want to analyse the issues and difficulties which can arise around indoor-outdoor flow.

We will discuss the obvious problems created by weather, by limited space or overabundance of space. We will discuss Montessori's recommendations for gross motor activity and look at what recent research tells us about that. We will re-visit the objectives of a Montessori programme and examine outdoor possibilities through that lens. And we will also review the role of the Montessori teacher, the liberty of the child and what makes a good activity.

These discussions will underpin your potential re-design of your outdoor space and its programme. You will consider activities in detail, map the interconnections between those activities, and identify the layers to be explored by three, four and five year-olds. You will understand every activity's purpose and how it supports the development of Montessori outcomes. You will create the lessons necessary to link tamariki with these materials and you will understand how to establish a Montessori culture in this outdoor environment. If necessary, you will make decisions about how to get the rest of your team on board and will go home with plans for your 'first steps' as well as ideas for future developments.

You can register online at: [www.montessori.org.nz/professional-events](http://www.montessori.org.nz/professional-events)

## Professional Learning for 6-12 years Storyteller of Truth

**Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 September:**

Berhampore Montessori School, 105 Britomart St, Berhampore, Wellington

**Time:** 9am – 4pm (both days)

This workshop is for kaiako involved or interested in Montessori Cosmic Education, and looks at how to build upon a rich oral storytelling tradition for 6 to 12 year olds.

It will focus on why a storytelling tradition is important to maintain in all subject areas, and how the teacher's role as a 'storyteller of the truth' needs to be central in the implementing of Cosmic Education. We will also explore practical ways to improve our storytelling ability in order to use stories to inspire exploration and creativity on the part of the children and for the child from 6 to 12 years. The workshop will be led by Rebecca Dallam, Director of Elementary Training at the Australian Centre for Montessori Studies.

Register online at: [www.montessori.org.nz/professional-events](http://www.montessori.org.nz/professional-events)





# MANZ Conference 2016 Write-Ups

Here is a re-cap of some of the Conference 2016 highlights, written by Council members. The conference lived up to its title: 'Exploration – a Joyful Experience: Hoparatia – he wa pai'. For the first time, we included a presenter with experience and training in Montessori for a 0-3 environment, Peta Gibson. She was joined by Sarah Werner Andrews, and Wendy Calise as well as several New Zealand presenters. The range and depth of the presentations was truly inspirational.

## Trust the Wise Infant

*Presentation by Peta Gibson, reviewed by Mamira Ali, Montessori House of Children, Hamilton*

Listening to Peta Gibson's keynote was a reinforcement of what I believe as a Montessori educator but sometimes forget in the busy routines. Play is the work of the child; development at all levels happens when babies and toddlers are exploring and playing. We as adults need to 'trust the wise infant' and provide opportunities for them to explore and challenge themselves. It is important for them to make mistakes, to learn and, instead of correcting them, we need to observe and let them learn from their experiences. This will enable them to retain information, assess risk and help them to make sense of the world around them.

What does independence look like in the under 3 year child? Independence in this age group is about movement and exploration, which needs to be done at the child's own pace. By understanding this age group's need to move, we can understand their learning. Observing their hand movements in this age is also important as it has a strong connection with brain development, according to Montessori and current research.

One aspect of respectful relationships with the 0-3 year child is speaking authentically and talking about real things. Peta mentioned the best moments of learning between adult and infant are the 'care giving moments.' It is the time where you can have meaningful conversations with infants and tell them what you are doing. To infants such experiences provide opportunities to absorb language and develop it. By observing and waiting for infants to respond we can see how they tell us what they understand and how they communicate nonverbally.

**Speech revolves around respect. By respecting the infant, we provide uninterrupted opportunities of exploration and joyful learning. Infants are naturally self-motivated and develop control over their body instinctively. As Montessori guides, our role is to trust their natural instinct and try not to speed up these processes. By stepping back, observing and trusting the wise infant we show respect to them.**



The brain development in infants occurs rapidly. Their brain is making new neural connections. This activity is faster in this period than any other period in the child's life. It is influenced by the infants environment, relationship with adults and the infants own experiences to be able to explore; the infant needs to feel safe and happy and have adults and environment that allow freedom to explore and develop at their own pace. Montessori considered any unnecessary aid a hindrance to a child's learning and development; this is important to remember when dealing with babies and toddlers. An unnecessary aid can be things such as carrying the babies too much, using walkers, and pulling them up to stand and correcting their work/play.

By allowing the young child the freedom to explore, we help them discover their own potential, their environment, we allow experimentation and problem solving, we nurture curiosity and encourage risk taking, above all we help them develop self-belief and love for learning. This for me would be the 'HELP' I will be giving them in future. For me as a teacher the phrase, "Trust the wise infant" is profound, it holds a deep message for me to slow down, sit back, observe, enjoy and learn from the wise infant!

# Creating an environment of respectful practice in the 0-3 classroom

*Presentation by Peta Gibson, reviewed by Claire Nesdale, Wee Wisdom, Auckland*

In her keynote speech Peta Gibson reminded us all to “Trust the wise infant”. This phrase is a perfect base for us to reflect on how respectful our practice must be of the infant and toddler and how much we must trust them and be able to slow down and give respectful interactions with them.

Throughout her workshops Peta continued to refer to respectful practice. She urged us all to slow down and think about how our actions affected the infant and toddler. In our busy centres, day-to-day life gradually builds a ridge routine to ensure compliance is met, bottoms are clean and children eat and sleep on time ... sound familiar? We are all well aware that we work within a set ratio outlined by the Ministry of Education. Five under twos with one adult is no easy task, but it is the task we are set and have to deal with in reality. So how do we slow down? How do we make time to give the infant and toddler the respectful interactions they deserve? It's surely a fine line to walk, and each day you may be on different sides of this line.

As adults we tend to have a heightened sense of order, and urgency to get things done and done correctly. Driven by registers and time restraints I believe that sometimes we end up doing things to the infant and toddlers rather than doing things with them. So in your daily reflection, when the classroom is going off track or you're so organised you're whipping infants and young children off on schedule for their nappy check, question what interactions you had that day and how many of them were respectful? Is being off track so bad? Are the infants and toddlers happy and are they learning by their mistakes? Is your respectful practice simply to step back and observe? And when you changed his nappy, did you invite him warmly and talk to him, letting him know what was happening?

Peta's message has had a large impact within the centres which I am privileged to work with. The teams spent time talking about respectful and meaningful practice and what they could do to make it happen. In the past week each Montessori guide has made an effort to slow down and be present in each interaction they have with each infant and toddler. They are purposely using slow body movements, quiet voices and unhurried interactions. They are stepping back to give the infant and young child the freedom to make their own mistakes and there's no big rush to fix things up. The difference from this reflective work in the classroom is that there's an overall feeling of calm and tranquillity.

My challenge to all 0-3 communities is to reflect on how you can slow down and create respectful interactions within the restrictions of your daily routine. Ask yourself if you are doing things to, or with, the young child? Do you have faith in the wise toddler and the Montessori philosophy ... do you have faith in yourself?

## Toilet Learning

*Presentation by Peta Gibson, reviewed by Gillian Somers, New Plymouth Montessori, New Plymouth*

This year, for the first time ever, we had a 0-3 speaker at conference and although we don't have a 0-3 centre in New Plymouth (yet!) I was keen to go along and listen to Peta Gibson speak about Toilet Learning – especially after hearing her inspiring keynote speech urging us to “Trust the inner wise young child”.

**In my 20 plus years of teaching I have noticed that despite all new research and new 'supportive' products, where once it was uncommon to have a child that wasn't toilet confident (or well on the way) at age 2½ - 3, now it seems to be usual that a 2½ year old is seen as ready to begin the process. I was interested to hear more about Montessori 0-3 philosophy on this topic.**

The first point of difference was the language. Peta spoke about Toilet Learning versus Toilet Training. She reminded us that “You can't teach somebody something that they don't already know”. I have pondered a lot on that quote and what it might mean and I think she is referring to needing to have the interest and the readiness there; that the learning comes from the child. There is a difference is what Montessori Guides would observe as readiness as opposed to current practices. I don't say traditional practices as I suspect the practices of previous generations differ quite significantly from current ones. Indeed, as Peta reminded us, only two generations ago, most children were toilet trained before the age of 2.



Peta talked to us about the physical and psychological transition the young child goes through, along with the crisis of self-affirmation. Between the ages of 18 and 24 months the child goes through a stage of opposition, and for some children the choice to learn toileting may be the one choice they have control of in their life. Peta cautioned that if you start the toileting process during this time you risk being faced with a lot of opposition, therefore an important part of our work is preparation. From a Montessori perspective, children under the age of three are seeking functional independence. We need to create a cooperative relationship with the child: empowering him to do as much for himself and solidifying that trusting relationship. It is from this foundation that toilet learning can develop.

The process itself is three staged:

- 1) I feel a sense that something has just happened.
- 2) I feel I'm doing something right now.
- 3) I feel the sensation that something is about to happen.

If a child spends one year in disposables, then that's a year that he hasn't been getting that feedback of "I do something and something happens"; but rather he has the impression of "I do something and nothing happens"; so we will need lots of training to develop that awareness.

During transition times, offer the young child a choice: "Do you want to use the big toilet or the potty?" Peta reminded us that this is a work choice just like any other and it is a process just like any other activity. Peta suggested that as far as possible we do stand-up nappy changes rather than lying the child down.

Create that cooperative relationship with the child at nappy changing time with the child gradually taking over more and more responsibility.

Peta suggested that underpants are not used until the child has shown that he can be successful. Regression is common in terms of toileting, especially at times of change or upheaval in the child's life. She also reminded us that we need to support parents in this process and that ultimately it was the parents' decision as to when to start. We could advise and share the process, but it is their decision and we need to honour that.

Language is important, especially to this child with the absorbent mind. Be careful of the words you use such as "yucky" or referring to the smell. When a child has a mishap, Peta told us "It is not an accident. No-one has been injured!"



#### **Peta recommended some resources for our own further development:**

[www.howwemontessori.com](http://www.howwemontessori.com)

*Sarah Moudry: book on Toilet Awareness (Sarah was also involved in the wonderful DVD called Edison's Day featuring a day in the life of her 20 month old son).*

Toilet learning is the work of the child. We can't do it for them, we can only create the right environment to support it.

While much of this talk referred to the process for the 0-3 child, I still found ideas I can share with our 3-6 parents, plus resources for their younger children which may help them look at an alternative way to prepare their child for toilet readiness.

## **The Adult's Role in Creating Exploration**

*Presentation by Sarah Werner Andrews, reviewed by Jan Gaffney, Wā Ora Montessori School, Wellington*

I really enjoyed listening to Sarah Werner Andrews, especially her presentation on the Adult's Role in Creating Exploration.

She said we can support exploration by:

- 1) Creating relationships;
- 2) Connecting the child to the materials;
- 3) Providing the structure.

She said that building a solid relationship with the child should not be done in the course of giving lessons, but in spending time with them in non-directed, child centred activity. If necessary, with a child who challenges us, this should be for four to six weeks. In this time, the child won't change, but our attitude to them most likely will. A positive relationship with each child in our care is the most essential thing to establish.

Our role as the adult is to prepare the environment to meet the child's needs, and then to connect the child to that environment – usually in the form of lessons. We need to consider what lessons need to be given as direct presentations (i.e. three period lessons) and what can be given as an invitation to explore (i.e. this is the ----, I wonder what we can do with this...).



We provide the structure not just in the environment we create, but in the way we connect the child to it – the way we limit what he or she can do in the course of their day. Do we expect them to imitate what we have done, or do we invite and expect the child to make their own discoveries. Are we setting them up for joyful discovery?

Some lessons encourage exploration – art or the bells for instance, and others we find it hard to allow exploration – the pink tower or the red rods. Often with these lessons, we expect the child to do it exactly the way we gave the lesson. But Sarah told us we have to give the child the freedom or liberty to take the lesson where they want to go.

She told us we should aim to get to the point where we don't expect the child to do what we did, but to wait and see where they child will take the lesson. Of course, this cannot be done without setting constraints – it cannot be a free for all. The child's constraint lies in the questions we ask the child and the way we invite him or her to connect with the material. Our constraint as the teacher lies in the purpose of our material – there are inherent limits built into most of the materials. We need to ask ourselves – are we hurting the material, are we abandoning them by leaving them, is there purpose to what they are doing? Often we can't tell straight away, so instead, we need to make the time to observe.

**We have to observe their choices, observe what they do in reaction to a lesson, both when you leave them to work with it and later when (if) they take it out again. It is only then, when we can stop ourselves from stepping in too soon, and leave the invitation open for the child to extend themselves, that real exploration will happen. Of course, that is easier said than done.**

As Haim Ginott (1972) said, "I've come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It's my personal approach that creates the climate. It's my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanised or dehumanised."

## Exploring Social Experience

*Presentation by Sarah Werner Andrews, reviewed by Louise Booth, Milestone Montessori, Tauranga*

"Ride the horse in the direction it is going – academic and social experience go hand in hand. This session will focus on the social dimension of the children's development. We will look at exploration as it relates to the child's own social experience, as well as how children learn from, and with, each other."

I found Sarah Werner Andrews very inspirational to listen to and her presentation has sparked great discussions and reflections among our team of teachers.

Her viewpoint is that academic and social development are intertwined, and that nowadays children are showing greater social needs and more of a desire to work in groups rather than individually.

She stressed the importance of Montessori directresses being mindful in supporting children just as much socially as we do physically, emotionally and academically. Dopamine is released when children feel a sense of belonging socially. (Dopamine is a neurotransmitter that helps control the brain's reward and pleasure centres. Dopamine also helps regulate movement and emotional responses, and it enables us not only to see rewards, but to take action to move toward them [www.psychologytoday.com](http://www.psychologytoday.com))

Sarah felt that it is an essential part of our role as Montessori directresses to ensure we compassionately help children understand acceptable social behaviour. Children come to our schools to have social experiences and to work with the materials. I loved it when Sarah said "we need to think about social interactions as a material". The adults in the environment should role model what is appropriate while using Grace and Courtesy as our model. Words for invitation, words for inclusion, how to decline, how to resolve disagreements, co-operation, communication, patience, support, empathy, compassion, turn taking etc! Social skills that we can help support and educate the children on, in preparing them for later years in life.

We already know children learn so much from each other on a daily basis and this is very evident in mixed age grouping. When learners think of themselves as teachers



they retain things better. Sarah emphasised the importance of providing opportunities for paired or group interactions for social development. The use of group games is a great tool for this. Whether it's group operations with the golden bead material, sensorial extensions, cultural or language activities, there are great ways to involve more than one child. Learning how to work together, learning how to be leaders – we need to support this in our environments. We need to help children learn how to work together. One of the main goals is partnership between peers!

Are we observing enough? Social observations are extremely important. Are the children interacting / do they need support / are they struggling / are they relying on the adults in the environment or showing independence? Sarah discussed how common it is for adults to swoop in to resolve things among the children, preventing children from learning from one another and solving their own conflicts. How can children at Primary level work collaboratively if they haven't had opportunities for this in preschool?

As the workshop came to an end Sarah reminded us we should be working with the whole child, within a holistic approach in encouraging and supporting them to embrace life with love enthusiasm and gratitude.

I left feeling very inspired, empowered and have since engaged in fantastic discussions among colleagues, parents and the children about her workshops.

## Success through our Failures

*Reviewed by Anne-Marie Love, Montessori Children's House Wanaka*

Deliberating on what to write, I reflected back and thought about what had the biggest impact on me, and asked myself: as a result of attending the conference what, if anything, will I change?

For the majority of the time I attended the workshops run by Sarah Werner Andrews where I was mesmerised by her wealth of knowledge, and I absorbed the daily practical guidance she so generously shared with us.

What most struck a chord with me was her workshop on the role of the adult. Sarah reminded us that in order to give to the children we have to become learners ourselves. For it is in the learning that allows us to become humble and realise how we can improve. To further emphasise this point she showed us a video clip of Michael Jordan. In the clip Jordan quantified the number of games he had lost alongside the number of shots he had missed. He also acknowledged he had failed over and over and over again in his life and this is why he had succeeded. It was the failures that gave him strength.

Likewise, Wendy Calise captivated me as she talked us through the video clip which consolidated her eight stages of observation. But the resounding message as she talked us through each of her earlier attempts at observation was that it had not happened over night. Not only did Wendy reiterate that it had taken her many years to finally understand how to observe, but she stressed that it is difficult to make sense of what you observe. The key component is you must make the commitment, and just as we encourage the children to repeat, we too will only get meaning when we observe over and over and over.

Sarah and Wendy both told stories of faux pas they had made along their way, further supporting that it is the mistakes that allow us to become humble as you work out where you went wrong.

**The theme of learning from the children was recurrent as I listened to Krista Kerr walk us through her inquiry using MJ2Ex, and when Carli Hausler told us that children will tell you what they need and when. The underlying message in all this: it is the children who teach us.**

Sarah stated at the beginning of her workshop that every day we go to work allows for us to be a better person. I wrote that down as I wasn't sure what she meant and I wondered how that looked in reality. Like Wendy Calise I too am a slow learner, and it is just now as I write this article that I understand what Sarah meant.

The key to my success is measured by my failures. So to become a better person I need to learn from my failures for that is when I will make discoveries and with those I hope will come success.





# Agency and Empathy

Presentation by Wendy Calise, reviewed by Rose Phillips, Eastern Suburbs Montessori Primary School, Auckland

Wendy Calise's keynote opening at Conference was both thought provoking and moving. Delegates were reminded about Montessori's perspective on the soul and the spirit as well as the words agency and empathy as being important for the purpose of guiding children towards peaceful living.

She encouraged us to help children pose questions for themselves about why something happened and what should happen now. She spoke of practical life as the agency of what we need as a community and grace and courtesy as the way to help children to demonstrate empathy as they learn to understand what it is to feel for another person in different situations.

## Exploration in the Primary Class – How far should our lessons go?

Wendy brought a fresh perspective to lesson presentations within our 6 – 9 classrooms. As teachers we can have that feel good attitude of presenting lessons just like we learned in our training, but often we need to reconsider this knowledge-giving approach and allow students more discovery in their learning. The wave of current educational thought is for students to think more deeply (be critical thinkers) and to work on solving problems for themselves. Many of our presentations lead students to the answers and processes required, and Wendy emphasised that we need to give more opportunities for them to figure things out, make mistakes and find answers for themselves. She demonstrated with a range of lessons from different curriculum areas where more 'process' from children gave them opportunities to do exactly that. She helped the delegates to "think for themselves" and have opportunities to work things out using critical thinking and processes we know to better understand some of the lessons we use in the classroom on a regular basis.

Engagement is the name of the game and our role is to stimulate the imagination and reasoning mind. She emphasised that we need to get students to do more thinking, and encouraged us to stop lessons in appropriate places where students could then think and work out how they could solve the problems they faced using what they knew already.

## Freedom and Responsibility – How to find the balance

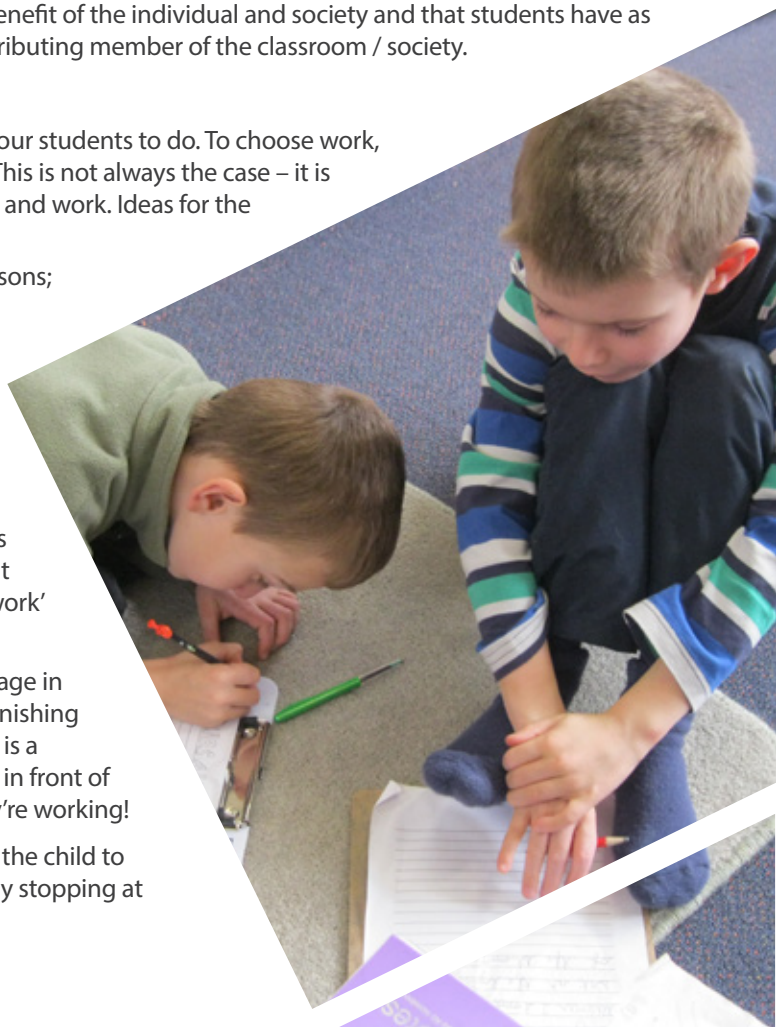
There is always a fine line between freedom and responsibility: allowing students to have freedom while also helping them to understand their responsibility towards their learning. Wendy listed the following freedoms with the justifications of responsibility for having the freedom. She emphasised that discipline is for the benefit of the individual and society and that students have as much freedom as allows them to be a successful, functioning, contributing member of the classroom / society.

### The 'freedoms' to consider in your classroom:

1. **The freedom to choose work.** Essentially this is what we want our students to do. To choose work, students need to be motivated and engaged in what they do. This is not always the case – it is not a choice to **not** work – it is a responsibility to choose wisely and work. Ideas for the non-workers:
  - keep them with you as you move around the class giving lessons;
  - have them help carry things to the lesson and engage with them even if the lesson is not for them;
  - have them observe or participate;
  - use other students to help inspire the non-workers and offer them challenges – it may be that the work is too easy.

If a student is not choosing work then give them a choice of two. Observation by the teacher is essential to pinpoint possible reasons for non-work and observation will also pinpoint work that a student may choose for avoidance or social reasons. Remember, after 'big work' it's OK to choose easier work.

2. **The freedom to work as long as one likes.** This is a real advantage in Montessori classrooms and students have the opportunity of finishing work at their own pace and time. We were reminded that there is a difference between working with material and having material in front of them! The responsibility is to be *working* – not looking like they're working!
3. **The freedom to move about the class.** The responsibility is for the child to move with purpose, grace and self-discipline, not like a butterfly stopping at every table to distract others.





4. **The freedom to choose where to work.** This requires grace and courtesy which includes thinking about the needs of the community and the structure of the work, e.g. writing work is best done at a table.
5. **The freedom to choose with whom to work.** The responsibility is to allow a balance of productive work and thinking about who inspires you to work. Conversations are necessary and can enhance learning. Helping students reflect on the type of conversations that support learning and their independence may need to be a focus to review productive work.
6. **The freedom to choose to help others.** The responsibility of allowing others to learn and that helping others does not mean doing the work for others. At times it may be necessary to limit the amount of help that a student can do if it interferes with their learning.
7. **The freedom to do nothing.** Doing nothing is sometimes necessary as it is part of the work cycle after completing 'big work'. An eye on the frequency of doing nothing may be necessary to determine avoidance!
8. **The freedom to observe.** Watching others and lessons can be a characteristic of learning. As a teacher you need to observe to watch engagement – is it time wasting or legitimate watching?
9. **The freedom to talk with friends.** There needs to be a balance but engaging work should be punctuated with conversation not 'riddled' with conversation.
10. **The freedom to be the leader of a group.** A leader: shows care and concern; shows fairness; stands up for what is right; is not just telling others what to do; plans and has forethought; has patience to teach; considers the undesirable jobs; is to be held accountable for group work. All this without be dominating!
11. **The freedom to express displeasure** but of course the responsibility is to use grace and courtesy!
12. **The freedom to greet a visitor to make them feel welcome.** Another opportunity to practise grace and courtesy – speaking clearly, bringing a drink, as well as engaging in polite conversation.

## The Role of Observation – What's the point?

In Wendy's final presentation she recapped her eight stages of observation. She emphasised throughout the conference the importance and emphasis on observation and shared her own journey of developing her observation skills. Part of her original key note on this topic at the MANZ Conference in 2011 can be viewed via youtube on: (15mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ypR-P1gAfas>

A brief synopsis of the stages are:

1. **Illusion Stage:** thinking that you are observing while presenting a lesson – looking up to observe, then looking down and wondering how the lesson could have gone so wrong!
2. **Mobile Stage:** walking around and conversing with either a student or another teacher while observing.
3. **Prison Guard:** having stopped moving around but observing what irritates rather than the reason for the behaviour.
4. **Crooked Finger:** using your pointer to have students come to you to correct or ask questions.
5. **Stink Eye:** observing, punctuated with a disapproving look to warn or correct students not doing what you think they should be doing.
6. **Build my Ego:** allowing interruption during observation by answering questions from students.
7. **Pavlov's Dog:** needing to observe uninterrupted but being distracted and as a result having a pay jar to put your fine / distraction money in.
8. **Not respond:** meaning that you are truly engaged in your uninterrupted observation and concentrating on what is going on in the classroom.

We are all on a journey and can wane between the different observation stages. Wendy emphasised that observation is the key to knowing your classroom and that Stage 8 is where we should be aiming!



# WORKSHOP WRITE-UP:

## Montessori Model United Nations heads Down Under

Amanda Marsh, Meraki Montessori, Auckland, recently attended the Montessori Model United Nations (MMUN) workshop in Sydney. The MMUN is for 9-15 year old students and held annually in New York or Rome. The teacher conference that Amanda attended was held to train individuals to take delegates to future conferences.

If you had a magic wand and could change anything in the world, what would it be? Poverty? Violence? Access to clean water and nutritious food? This was how the Montessori Model United Nations New Teacher Workshop began.

We were invited to look at how this amazing programme is prompting young people aged 9-15 to ask the same question and find solutions through the forum of a United Nations select committee. Over the course of the weekend we got a taste of the experience students will have. The New Teacher Workshop allowed us to experience first-hand what students experience: from researching a topic to giving an opening speech.

The Montessori Model United Nations (MMUN) is that magic wand that transforms youth into agents of change.



Maria Montessori said,  
*"Averting war is the work of politicians; establishing peace is the work of education,"*  
and that is the purpose of MMUN.

Maria Montessori said, *"Averting war is the work of politicians; establishing peace is the work of education,"* and that is the purpose of MMUN. Through understanding the child's sensitive period for reason, justice and morality, the experience provides opportunity for students to represent a nation's interests and by doing so gain empathy, understanding and the ability to champion a cause – while being mindful of the effects on others. A key element of MMUN is reaching consensus: finding a solution that does not create winners and losers but creates a solution that is acceptable to all and therefore, more lasting and effective.

The preparation in the classroom culminates in a model UN conference currently held in New York, USA or Rome, Italy annually. There, student delegates have an eye-opening experience where problems become people with faces and names. They forge international friendships and discover the satisfaction of agency as they find solutions to real problems facing the world today. What sets this apart from other model United Nations events is that it is not competitive in nature, and more accurately mirrors the actual UN process. The conference is open to all students aged 9-15 whether attending Montessori primaries, homeschooled or in a state school setting.

In March, Alexandra Bailey and Rita Savanah took the first group of students from Australia to participate in the MMUN conference. They came back knowing that this was something that needed to spread. The MMUN teacher conference was a step to train more individuals to be qualified to take delegates to future conferences. At the teacher conference held over just one weekend, we learned about how the MMUN works, how to guide students through the process, how to fundraise and plan logistics as well as going through the process to write a UN resolution on Access to Clean Water in our simulation.

The possibility of holding a MMUN conference in Australia was enthusiastically talked about and is a goal for 2017, making this wonderful programme accessible to more children here. In an effort to make that a reality another New Teacher Workshop will be held prior.





## Here is what Rita and Alex have to say about the MMUN:

Twelve students from Forestville Montessori School, Sydney, Northside Montessori School Sydney and Canberra Montessori school returned from New York City in March having represented six United Nations member countries at the Montessori Model United Nations. Guided by their MMUN-trained directors, the children spent six months preparing for this momentous event. They read and debated their position papers on Cyber Security and The Illicit Trade Of Small Arms. The last day of conference was held in the UN General Assembly Hall where they presented their combined resolutions. A life changing experience for students, directors and parents alike.

Funding for the trip was made possible in part by student lead fundraising at the individual schools. Following this, the first MMUN teacher training was held in July at Montessori East, Sydney. Due to popular demand, MMUN will hold another teacher training workshop at the end of January 2017. Please check [www.montessori-mun.org](http://www.montessori-mun.org) for exact dates.

## Karin, a parent from Canberra wrote:

"I highly recommend this experience. Not only was it a wonderful opportunity for our kids to meet and work together with other Montessori students within Australia but, once in NYC, to be part of something much larger with a real opportunity to affect change. They were so well prepared and confident. I, as a parent observing, loved every minute. It's almost impossible to explain how riveting it was to watch the committee grapple with, negotiate and reach their resolutions."



Have a look for yourself and discover the Montessori Model United Nations:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3plhSczYrIk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvbgjY0UEaw>

## Montessori Positions SITUATIONS VACANT



**Jenz Montessori PreSchool, Clive, Hastings - Teacher**

Email: [jenzmontessori@hotmail.com](mailto:jenzmontessori@hotmail.com)

**Meraki Montessori School, Siverdale, Auckland - Teacher**

Email: [rebecca.nicholson@merakimontessori.co.nz](mailto:rebecca.nicholson@merakimontessori.co.nz)

**Little Earth Montessori – Kapiti, Wellington - Head Teacher**

Email: [admin.littleearth@eeg.co.nz](mailto:admin.littleearth@eeg.co.nz)

**Montessori Rongotai, Wellington – Teacher**

Details at: <https://careers.best-start.org/>

**Fountain City Montessori, Hamilton - Registered ECE/Primary Teacher**

Email: [jobs@fcm.nz](mailto:jobs@fcm.nz)

**Birkenhead Point Montessori, Auckland - Fully Registered ECE and/or Montessori ECE**

Email: [lynn@bpm.net.nz](mailto:lynn@bpm.net.nz)

**Montessori Children's House Wanaka – Teacher**

Email: [annemarie.love@mchw.co.nz](mailto:annemarie.love@mchw.co.nz)

**Capital Montessori School, Wellington - Teacher**

Email: [katie@edperson.co.nz](mailto:katie@edperson.co.nz)

**Montessori Little Hands, Te Awamutu - Montessori Guide**

Email: [montessorilittlehands@gmail.com](mailto:montessorilittlehands@gmail.com)

**Otaki Montessori Pre School, Otaki - Head Teacher/Centre Manager**

Email: [omppresident@gmail.com](mailto:omppresident@gmail.com)